



Henry Knox and Knox's Quarters

It is believed that artillery commander Henry Knox established his quarters during the Valley Forge encampment in a small farmhouse in this area. When the revolution began there wasn't much American artillery to command until 1776 when Henry completed his daring, and many said foolhardy, plan to transport 59 captured British cannon and mortars 300 miles from Fort Ticonderoga New York to Boston during the winter. The arrival of these weapons at the heights overlooking Boston in January 1776 enabled the Americans to prevail in their siege of the British occupied city.

Before the war, Knox had been a bookseller in Boston, and he was well read: In other words self trained in military topics. Often, British officers would order military books from him and he taught himself about artillery and other military arts from books he read before selling them. He also associated himself with a group of people with mutual military interests "The Ancient Order of Artillerists". Realizing that artillery skills were sorely lacking in the Continental Army, Knox proposed that an academy be established. He envisioned the academy to be a place: "where the whole theory and practice of fortifications and gunnery should be taught". This was to become the basis for the United States Military Academy at West Point, established in 1802.

Because Knox had more academic and less practical experience with the military, foreign officers desiring to be in command of the artillery challenged his authority. The Commander-in-Chief adamantly defended him however, and later the congress upheld his authority. The siege of Yorktown Virginia was General Knox's best show of his ability. Here he advanced the artillery on broke the lines of and penetrated several British fortifications. General Washington promoted Henry Knox, as the youngest Major General in the army. It was Henry Knox who took over command of the United States Army upon Washington's resignation in 1783 and he was later selected by President Washington to become the first secretary of war in the new federal government.